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Title: Self-Expression in Early Adolescence

Dissertation Abstract

This dissertation aims to examine the value of self-expression in early adolescence. I became interested in the struggle between young adolescents' desire for conformity and their growing autonomy as individuals through teaching a first year class.

The introduction defines the term "self-expression".

Chapter One explores the influence of certain factors on self-expression during the early teenage years, through a review of the literature. Several theories are discussed.

Chapter Two focusses on the methodology behind teaching the value of self-expression in the artroom.

Chapter Three describes the scheme of work undertaken in the artroom, including observations I made of the students reactions to their tasks and a record of the comments they made during class.

Chapter Four draws conclusions from the sequence and includes recommendations and means by which the teaching of self-expression should be promoted for the artistic and intellectual development of the young adolescent.

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Self-Expression in Early Adolescence

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Education
in Candidacy for the

B.A. Degree in Art and Design Education

by

TARA FAHEY

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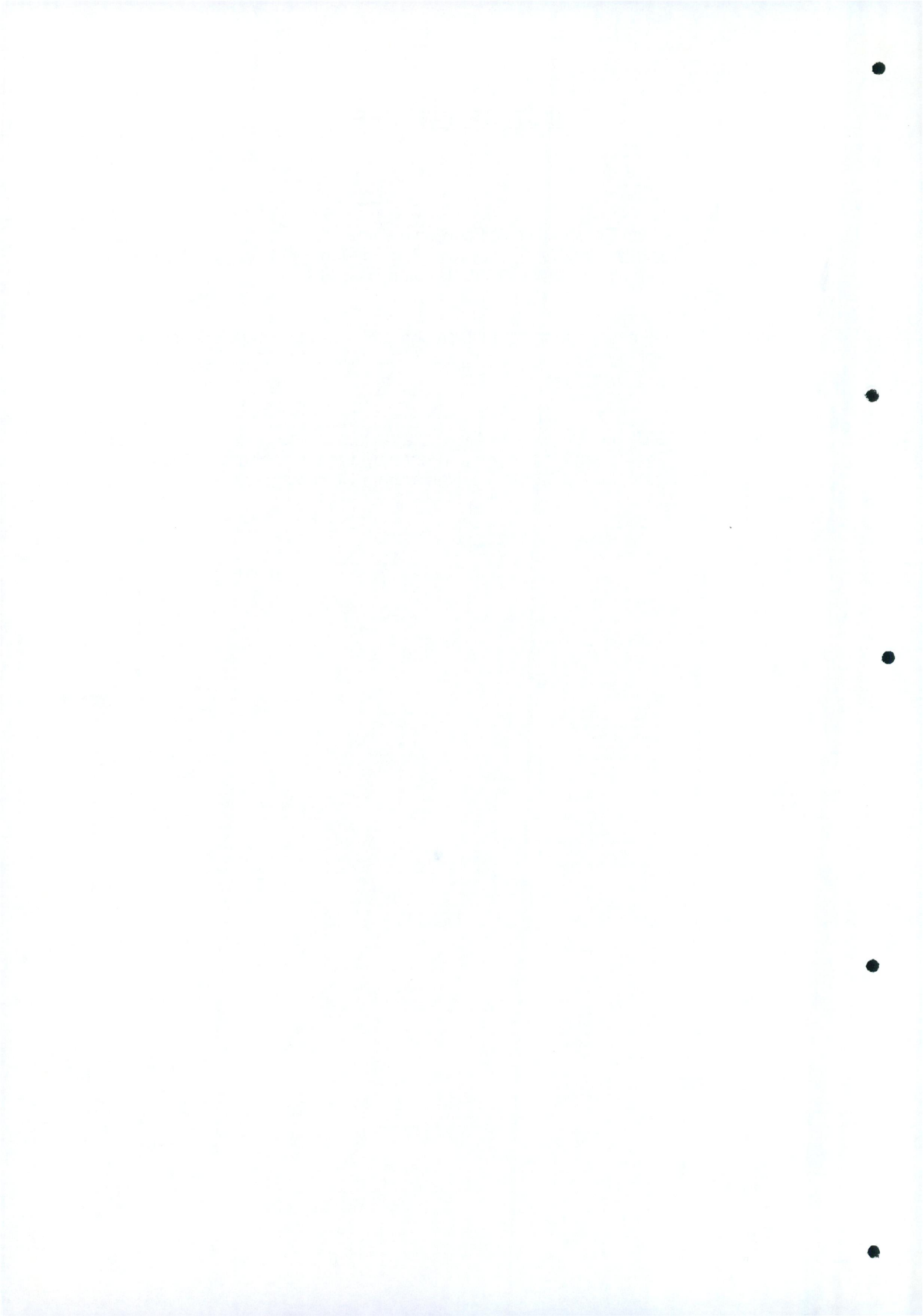
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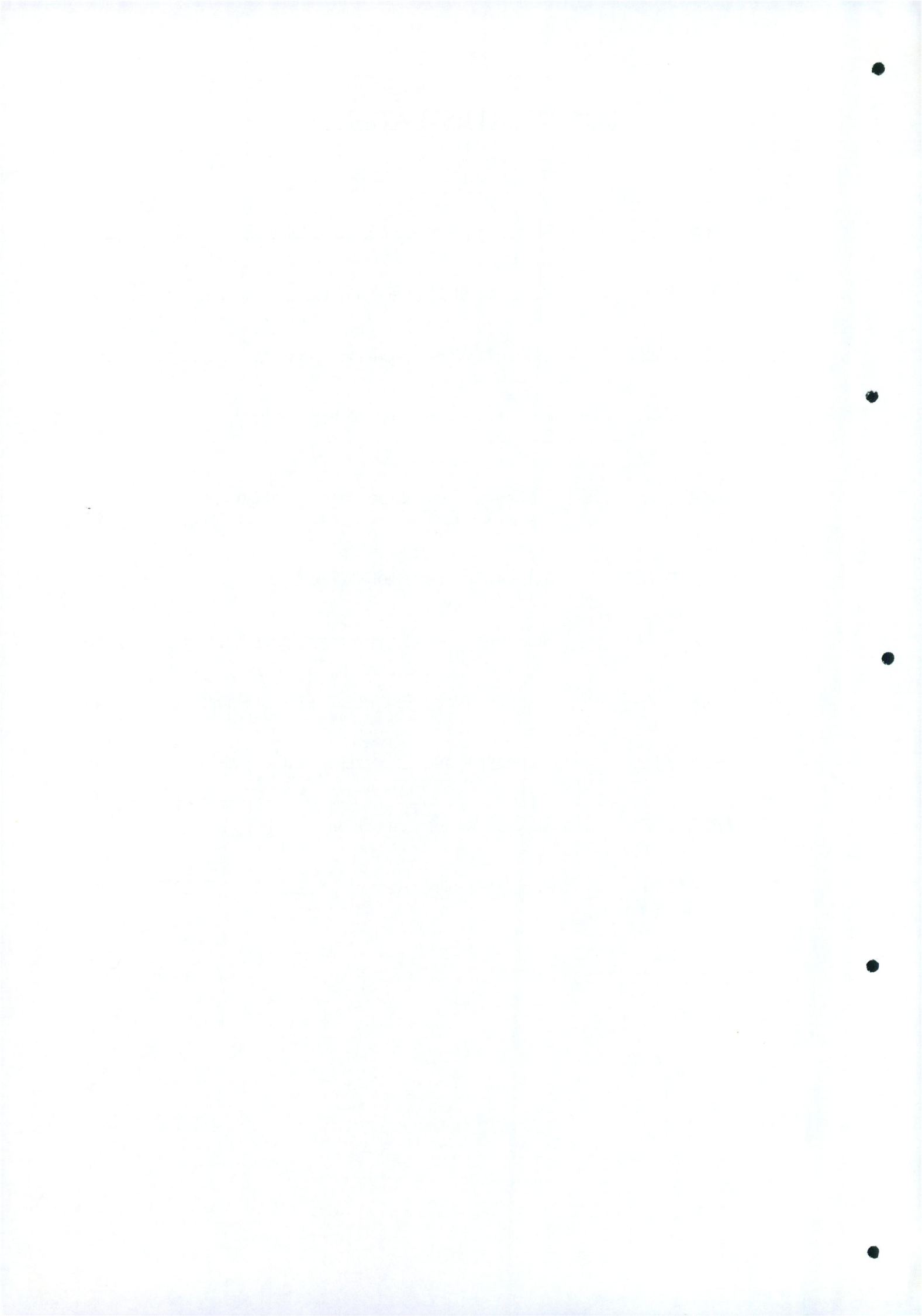
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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation deals with self-expression and early adolescence.

Lowenfeld and Brittain define self-expression as follows:

"Self expression is giving vent in constructive forms to feelings, emotions, and thoughts at one's own level of development."¹

As a result of teaching a first year group of young adolescents, I have become interested in the internal conflicts they experience about their own individuality and their relationships with others during this period in their lives.

Chapter 1 reviews the literature. In this chapter, theories about the most important influences on the intellect, individuality, and behaviour of the young adolescent are explored and also how these influences may hinder or develop their growing autonomy and self-expression.

Chapter 2 focusses on the effect of these influences on the art of the adolescent and the role of the teacher in developing self-expression in their students.

Chapter 3 describes the scheme of work undertaken in the artroom. This includes observations I made of the students' reactions to their tasks and a record of the comments they made during the class.

Chapter 4 draws conclusions from the sequence and includes recommendations and means by which the teaching of self-expression can



be promoted to aid the artistic and intellectual development of the young adolescent.



FOOTNOTES : INTRODUCTION

1. Victor Lowenfeld & W. Lambert Brittain. Creative and Mental Growth
8th Ed. Macmillan publishing Co. p18.



CHAPTER I

FACTORS INFLUENCING SELF-EXPRESSION IN EARLY ADOLESCENCE

1. EGO DEVELOPMENT

The conformist stage of development is usually reached during early adolescence or late childhood. This is a stage where rules are followed without question for a number of reasons, among them being concerns about "appearance, conventional behaviour, reputation and status".¹ Adolescents at this stage feel the need to be accepted by their peers and conform to the rules given them by social groups, and are more aware of their individuality than those who remain at the pre-conformist stage, although they generally will try to disguise this in their efforts to comply with the values of society among their peers.

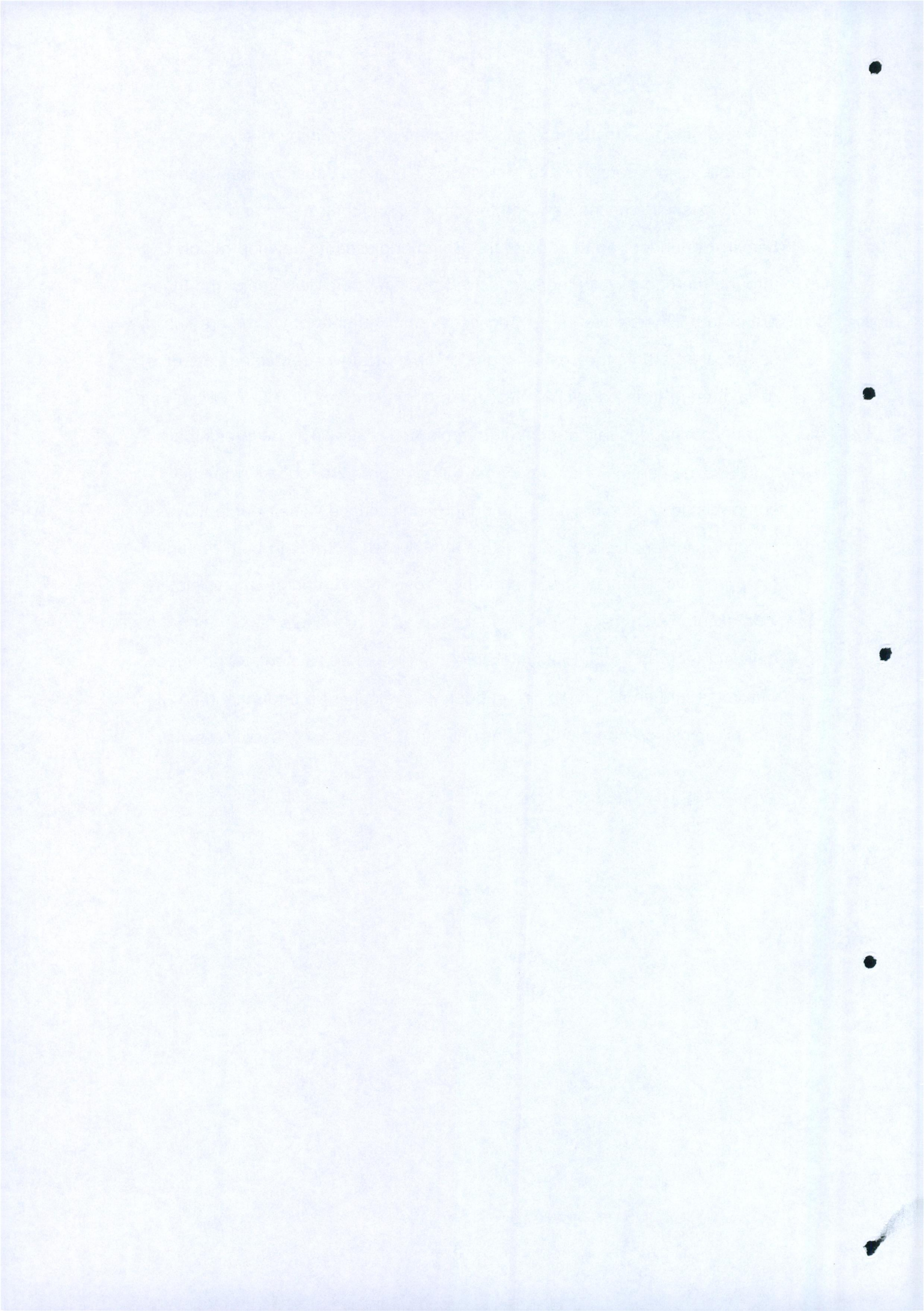
"It may be that conformity increases during the earlier adolescent years because the adolescent does not wish to reveal the self. Dressing, talking and acting like the peer group may help the adolescent to "not stick out" and may provide needed anonymity."²

Those who remain at this level throughout adolescence are called "steady conformists". Those adolescents who develop to a post-conformist stage throughout their adolescence begin to exhibit signs of individual insight with original views and behaviour. They become more aware of their own identity and are more willing to express themselves than are the "steady conformist" youths.

There are six different ego development trajectories as developed by Stuart T. Hauser, 1991 ³ which can be noted during adolescence. One of these is



that of profound arrest where the adolescent behaves impulsively and generally from a sense of self-protection. There are usually almost unaware of individual differences between themselves and their peers and are heavily dependent on their parents. Some adolescents develop rapidly through the ego development trajectories within one or two years and these are called "Progressive" or advanced. A small number of youths are known as "accelerated" as they exhibit signs of the most advanced stages of ego development from earliest adolescence, depending on their own judgement and becoming less reliant on their parents and peers. They express their individual perception at an early age. Other teenagers regress from the conformist to preconformist stage during adolescence. Their perceptions become simpler and less complex as they perceive others to be threatening or oppressive. The last stage is the psychosocial moratorium ego trajectory. This occurs when the adolescent first decreases, then increases, in ego development. In 1959, Erikson claimed that these adolescents experiment with roles and conflicting ideas, suddenly developing an understanding of others' opinions and gaining an insight into their own individuality.



2. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The occurrence of significant changes in physical development and appearance can not but have a huge effect on how adolescents perceive both themselves and their peers. W.H. Sheldon (1940) theorised that there is a strong link between personality and three body types; endomorphic, ectomorphic and mesomorphic. He offers his definition of these three body types in the following passage.

"Endomorphs are stocky, short overweight people who are generally outgoing, sociable and good-natured, in contrast to the tall, skinny ectomorphs who tend to be introverted, intellectual and inhibited. Most desirable in this typology are the mesomorphs - athletic, muscular individuals who are presumably assertive, energetic, extroverted and courageous."⁴

Although this conclusion is quite extreme, it has been proven that mesomorphs are considered more attractive than the other body types. Therefore, it follows that our acceptance of mesomorphs may indeed be the reason why they feel assertive, confident and poised. Research undertaken by Gillis (1982) and McConnell (1983) demonstrated that people generally stereotype particular body types, judging that extremely thin people (ectomorphs) are nervous and taciturn, whereas obese people (endomorphs) are pigeonholed as slovenly and undisciplined.

Mesomorphic adolescents, on the other hand, are generally given the benefit of the doubt on issues arising in school, employment and social situations.

"For instance, teachers and employers are more apt to overlook the inappropriate conduct and the mistakes of attractive adolescents than of those who are unattractive."⁵

The relationship between body type and how adolescents feel about themselves means that adolescent girls are placed at a special disadvantage. These girls live in a society where the desirability of females attaining the ideal mesomorphic body is advertised extensively by the media. The research undertaken by Friedman (1989) shows the increasing obsession of teenage girls with the mesomorphic body type.. Friedman reported that most girls see themselves as too fat, even though they may be normal or below the normal weight for their particular body type. An interesting side-effect of this obsession with attaining the ideal weight, is the change in behaviour and self-image of endomorphs from the 1940's and Sheldon's survey. Monello and Mayer's studies in 1963 showed that overweight, endomorphic girls showed "traits of passivity, withdrawal, concern with status, acceptance of dominant values, and desiring very close ties within their peer group."⁶

Because of these reasons and, more significantly, because of the attitudes of society towards these different body-types, it is not surprising that ectomorphs or endomorphs are unwilling to express themselves and thereby incur notice of their weight or height. These adolescents tend to follow the lead of their mesomorphic peers in most situations, including those in school, social life and employment.

3. INTELLECTUAL AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Although most psychologists cannot agree on a formal definition of it, intelligence is generally believed to include

- 1 the ability to deal with and comprehend abstractions.
- 2 the ability to acquire new knowledge or learn from experience.
- 3 the ability to solve perceptual, mental or social problems in new or unfamiliar situations.⁷

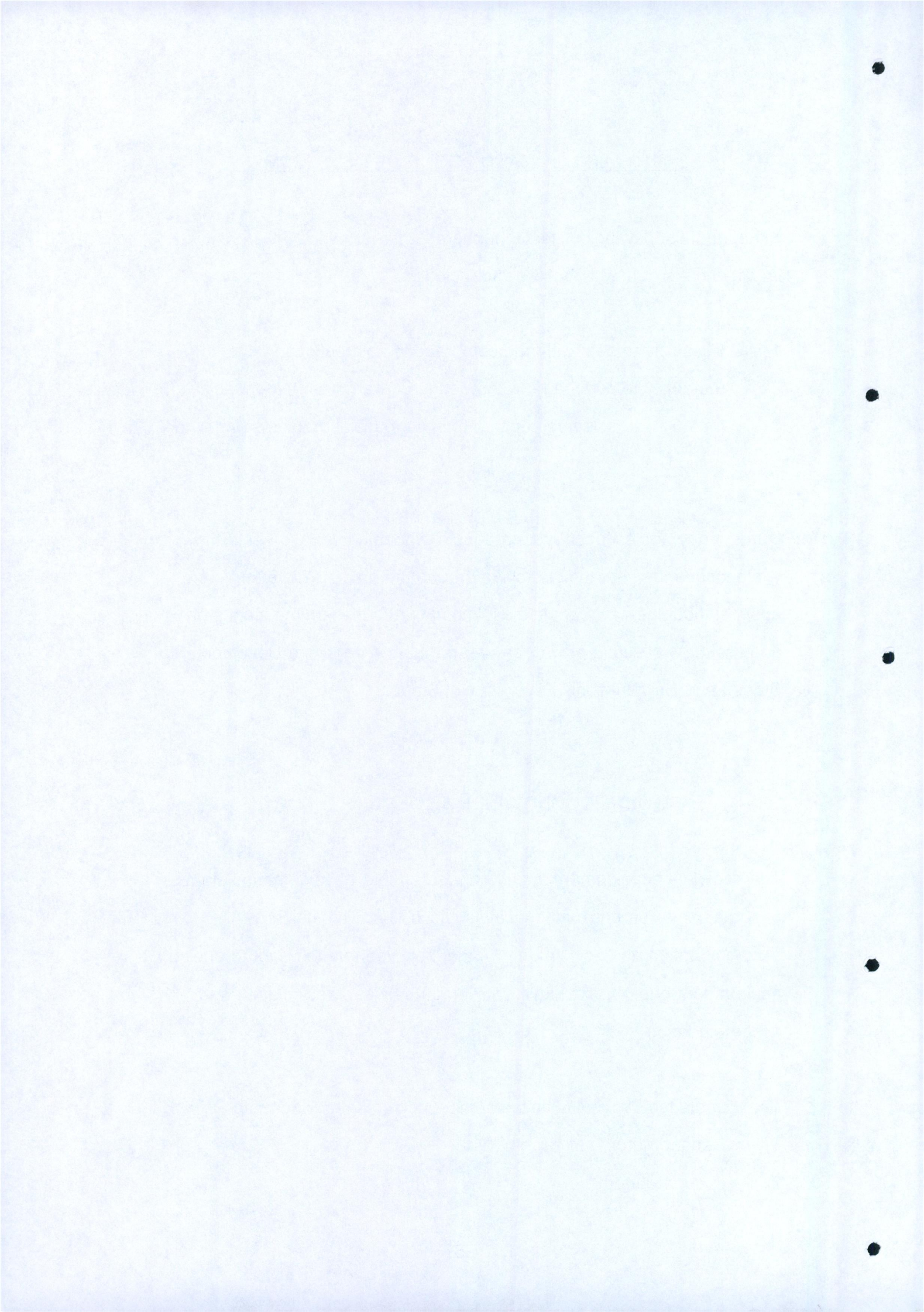
During early adolescence, young people gradually begin to seek explanations for what they perceive around them and understand more abstract thoughts. Two of the most important theories on the stages of adolescent intellectual growth are Jean Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Stages and Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Stages.

PIAGET'S COGNITIVE-DEVELOPMENT THEORY

The cognitive development theory consists of four developmental stages based along three basic mechanisms which are assimilation, accommodation and equilibrium. Piaget believed that to adapt to one's environment one must achieve equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation.

The four stages of cognitive development according to Piaget are

- 1 Sensorimotor (Birth - 1 year)
- 2 Preoperational (1 -5 years)



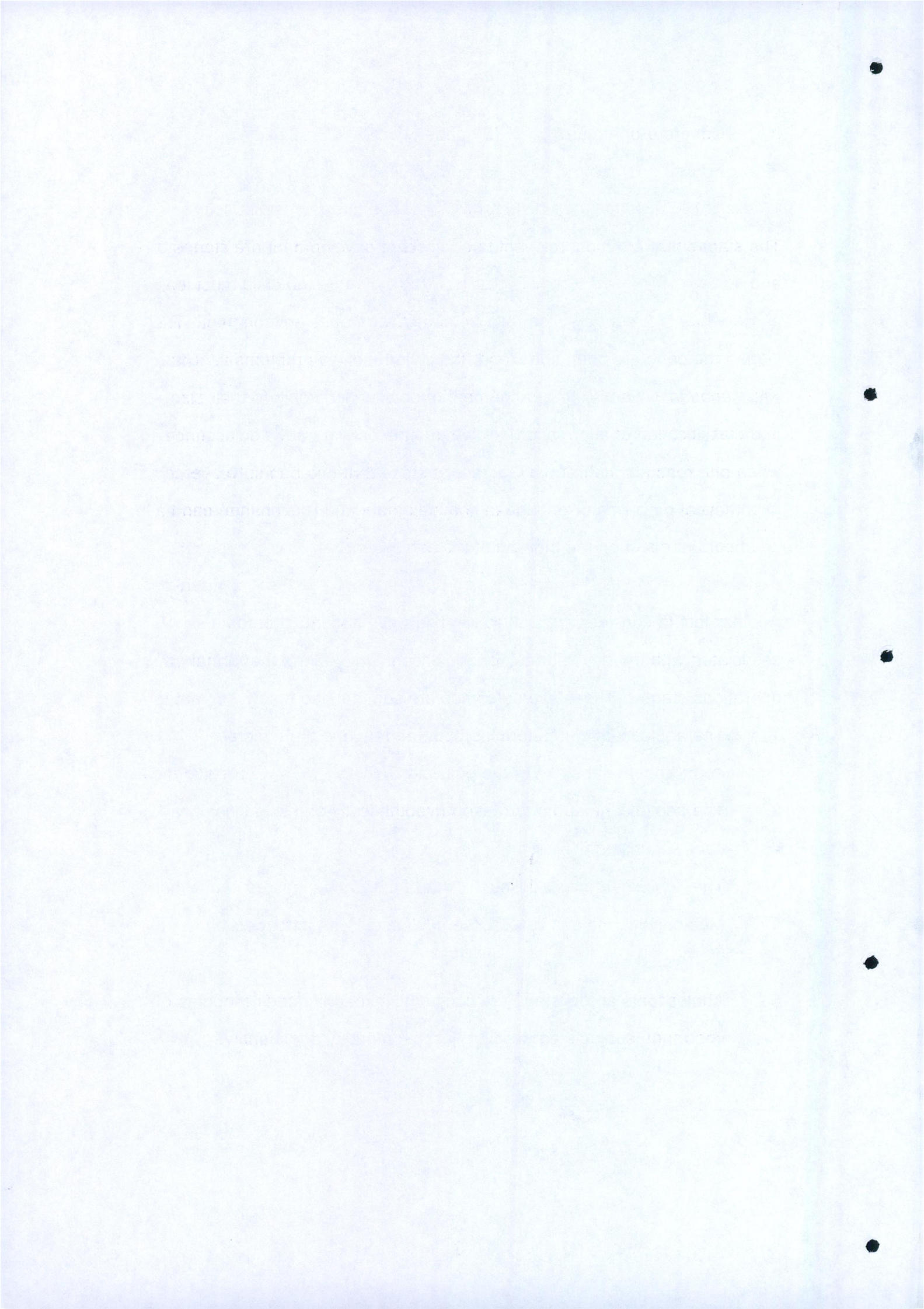
- | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|
| 3 | Concrete operation | (5 - puberty) |
| 4 | Formal operation | (puberty onwards) |

The stages that are most relevant to adolescent development are stages 3 and 4.

During the concrete operation stage, the child resolves problems associated with *seriation*; which is the arrangement of objects according to their size, and classification of information. However, it is only in early adolescence when one reaches the Formal Operations stage that one can solve hypothetical problems or engage in complex thought. This change can have an important effect on the thinking of the adolescent.

Another fact to consider are Dan P. Keating's five major outcomes associated with the development of adolescent logic during the formal operations stage.⁸ These five outcomes are summarised below.

- 1 The adolescent can determine both the real and the concrete apart from the abstract or the possible.
- 2 The adolescent learns to reason hypothetically and scientifically and can recognise falsification.
- 3 The adolescent now thinks about the future and explores causation.
- 4 Metacognition is possible for the adolescent and introspection is common.
- 5 Adolescents at this stage are constantly expanding their thoughts on important subjects eg: religion, justice, morality and identity.

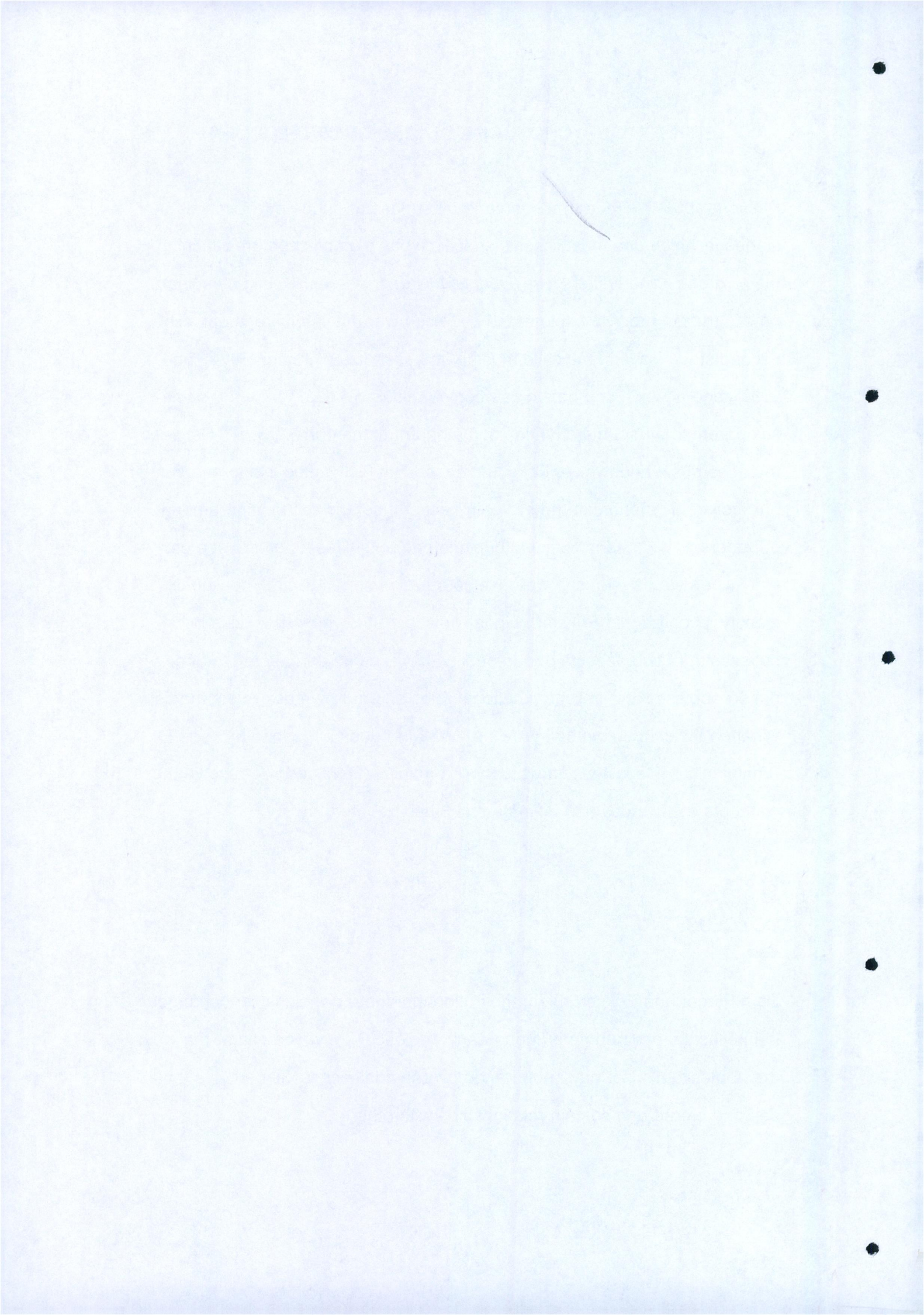


ERIKSON'S PSYCHOSOCIAL STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Erikson (1968) claimed that everyone must pass through psychosocial stages in which one must resolve specific types of conflict before reaching the next one. The first stage is *Trust vs Mistrust*, where the child must learn how to trust in order to explore and become aware of its environment. The second stage is when the child must try to assert its own autonomy. The third stage is when one has to overcome jealousy or rivalry with the same-sex parent to attract the attention of the parent of the opposite sex. Between the ages of six and twelve, Erikson theorises that we would like to overcome our individual inferiorities and to gain acceptance and recognition among our peers. This means we must begin to see ourselves as others see us. Only when we do this, can we develop our own separate and individual identity, according to Erikson. Linda Nielsen, 1991 writes that Erikson believes that "two aspects of our identity that assume primary importance during adolescence are our vocational roles and our own sex roles; that is, What do I want to be when I grow up, and what does it mean to be "feminine"? "masculine"? "a woman"? "a man"? Only after we resolve these concepts can we develop intimate relationships with others.

CONCLUSION

Both Piaget and Erikson affirm the notion that there are significant changes in intellectual development during early adolescence, which shape the way the adolescent's life may be led and how the adolescent will perceive the self and create and sustain relationships with others.



4. SELF CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Early adolescence is a vital period for the development of the individual's self-concept. This is a result of the large number of changes which occur during this time of life. Three major changes which influence the self concept of the young adolescent are;

- (a) physical changes.
- (b) intellectual growth
- (c) emotional independence

While the adolescent wishes to be part of their peer-group and accepted into society in general, it is equally important that they develop a sense of identity to ensure that they are able to express themselves individually. Hendry and Coleman, 1990 wrote "The denial of self can lead to depersonalisation."¹⁰

The self-image or the persons view of themselves and their self esteem (their evaluation of themselves) play important roles in the development of the adolescent's self-concept.

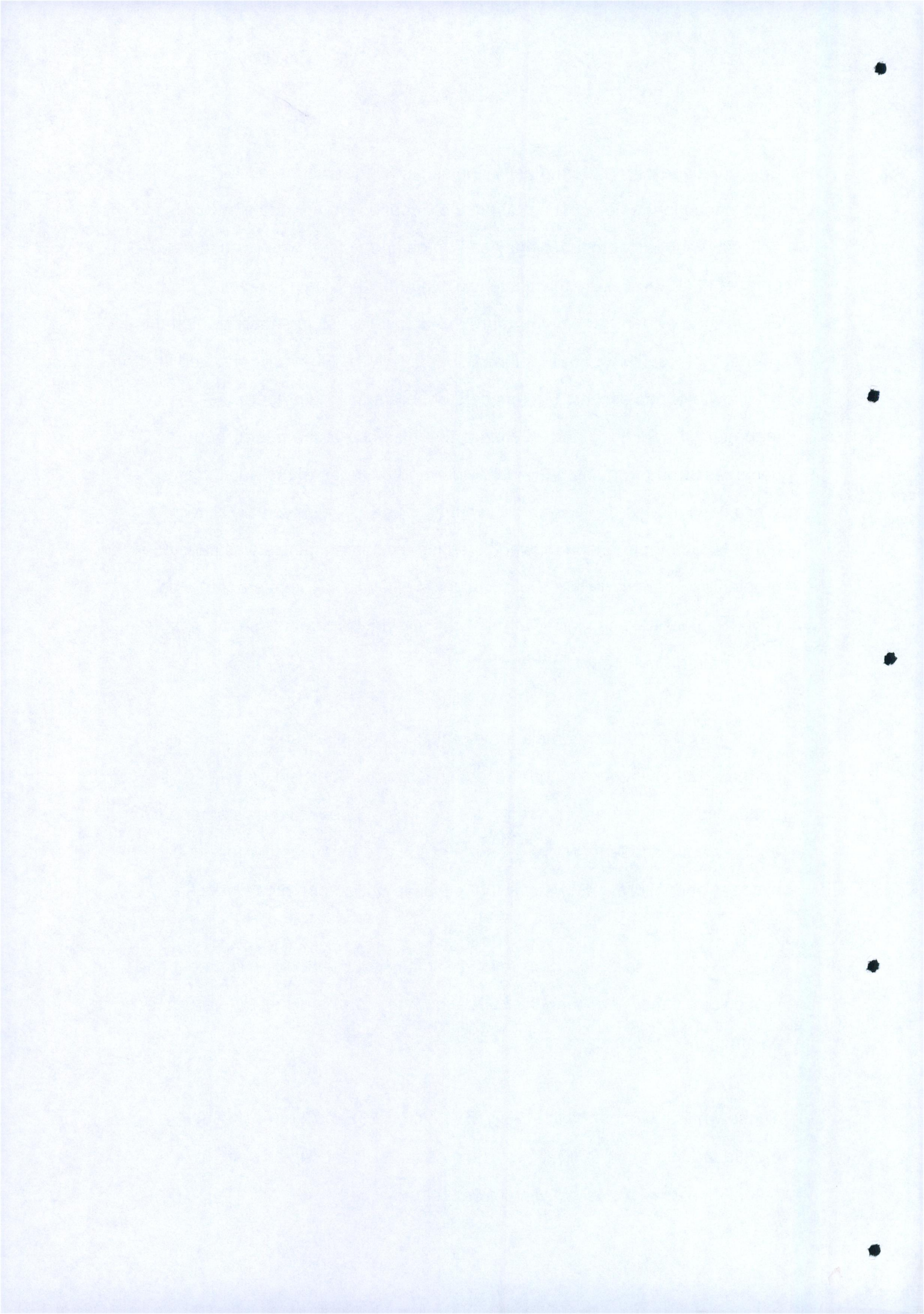
In Rosenberg's (1965) study of 5,000 teenagers, it was demonstrated that adolescents who had low self-esteem suffered from anxiety and depression and had weak academic abilities. They also felt that, although they wished for success in school; they would not be able to achieve it. The study also showed that they felt isolated and misunderstood and showed little trust in others. On the other hand, adolescents with high self-esteem generally felt that they had a lot of resources from which to draw in both academic and social situations. They considered themselves to be hard workers, confident, and leaders of their peer groups. Also, their parents displayed more interest in their activities than did those of the adolescents with poor self-esteem.

Erikson suggests that during early adolescence, there is more likelihood of a disturbance in the self-concept of the individual occurring, and that this is the only way that autonomous identity can be gained. Other writers such as Offer et al (1984) debate this issue, claiming that there is no such disturbance evident. However, there are definite pressures under which the young adolescent must bear during puberty. Firstly, the adults involved in the growth of adolescents (eg teachers or parents) try to prepare the teenager for adulthood and, secondly, the influence of the peer group becomes stronger, guiding the behaviour and attitudes of the adolescent. While boys tend to express conflict with their parents, girls, on the other hand, tend not to mention this fact; creating evidence that this was causing problems with their identity (Coleman, 1974). Overall, it appears that girls have a harder time coming to terms with their identity than boys do. This could be for a number of reasons.

Shaw (1976) says that "female futures are defined in essentially domestic terms....stereotyping which our educational system does little to undermine."¹¹ Sharpe confirmed this, adding that pubescent girls started to underachieve academically at this time and had a contradictory fear of both success and failure, being afraid that boys did not admire girls who were cleverer.

"Whether they accept or reject (as many do) the advice, treatment and curriculum of their teachers, they still absorb the form and sex-differentiated assumptions that these contain."¹²

These writers; Coopersmith (1967), Epstein (1973) and Harter (1983) mentioned four important factors which defined *global self-esteem* (the overall negative or positive view of oneself).¹³



- 1 Competence, or success in meeting achievement demands.
- 2 Social acceptance, or attention, worthiness, and positive reinforcement received from significant others.
- 3 Control, or feelings of internal responsibility for outcomes.
- 4 Virtue, or adherence to moral and ethical standards.

At a time when adolescents value the opinion of their peer-group more than their own and coping with significant physical transformation, the adolescent could easily feel uncomfortable with themselves. The emergence of their new roles and relationships may not always meet with success which could result in "recurrent transient depersonalisation"¹⁴(Rosenberg, 1979); meaning a sense of detachment from the self.

5. FAMILY INFLUENCE

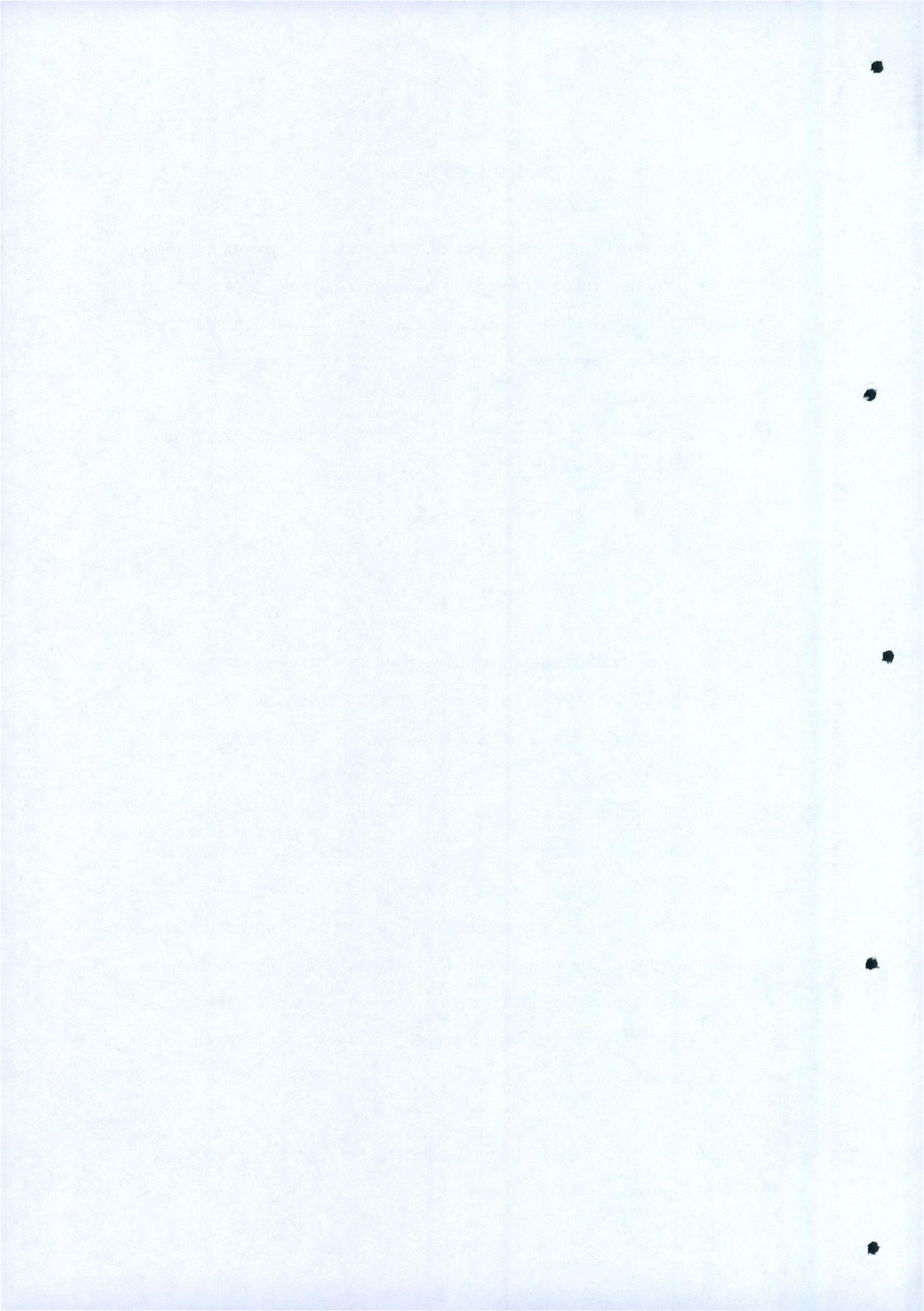
The family plays an integral role in the development of the adolescent as an individual. There are large differences between the ways in which families adjust to or encourage the growing autonomy of the teenager. Most parents generally hold conflicting attitudes towards this growth; on one hand wishing for their teenager to become independent and less childish in their conduct, and on the other hand, worried about the consequences of their increasing individuality. Because of this, parents can often inhibit the autonomy of their children, seeing it as a threat to their authority. During the early teenage years, most adolescents attempt to express themselves as individuals by making separate decisions and explaining how they made these, using their own perceptions and initiative. In some cases, such self-expression is encouraged by the parents, leading to a logical discussion on the subject. However, other parents avoid acknowledging the differences to be increasingly found in their adolescents. The families of steady, conformist teenagers are unusually reluctant to recognise their views and independence. Often parents refuse to explain their reasons for obstructing the adolescent's self-assertion, returning vague answers and avoiding the issues which are of concern to the teenager. When parents do not listen to their adolescent children or acknowledge their separate views, or perceptions, this can lead to arrested ego-development in the teenager. As the parent uses sarcasm, impatience or abuse to resolve an argument, the teenager becomes more wary of expressing their new insights, awareness or needs.

GENERATION GAP

Part of the reasons for the tension between adolescent and parent may be attributed to the generation gap which can create a barrier between them. This signifies "a discrepancy or divergence of viewpoint between adults and teenagers and, partly as a result of this, a degree of conflict between the generations".¹⁵ Some psychologists imply that the social cultures of the parents and their adolescent offspring are completely different. This theory takes into account the fact that when children reach adolescence, the average parent is reaching middle-age. During middle age, the parent is more prone to decreasing health conditions and disillusionment arising from unfulfilled ideals.

However, there are many studies which show more positive evidence of parent-teenager relationships, for example; that of Douvan and Adelson (1966). This research was carried out among over 3,000 teenagers in the United States, resulting in findings that showed conflicts in minor issues such as dating, make-up, music and leisure activities, while there was a general agreement on more important issues such as religion, morality, and political and sexual attitudes. Rutter's studies in 1976 among 14-year olds on the Isle of Wight confirms this, concluding that the degree of alienation between the generations showed only 4% of parents felt any increase in alienation, while only 5% of adolescents expressed rejection of their parents' values. 25% more of the adolescents surveyed reported minimal criticism of adults.

Eppel and Eppel (1966) studied this relationship between the generations and wrote that adolescents "regard themselves as belonging to a generation



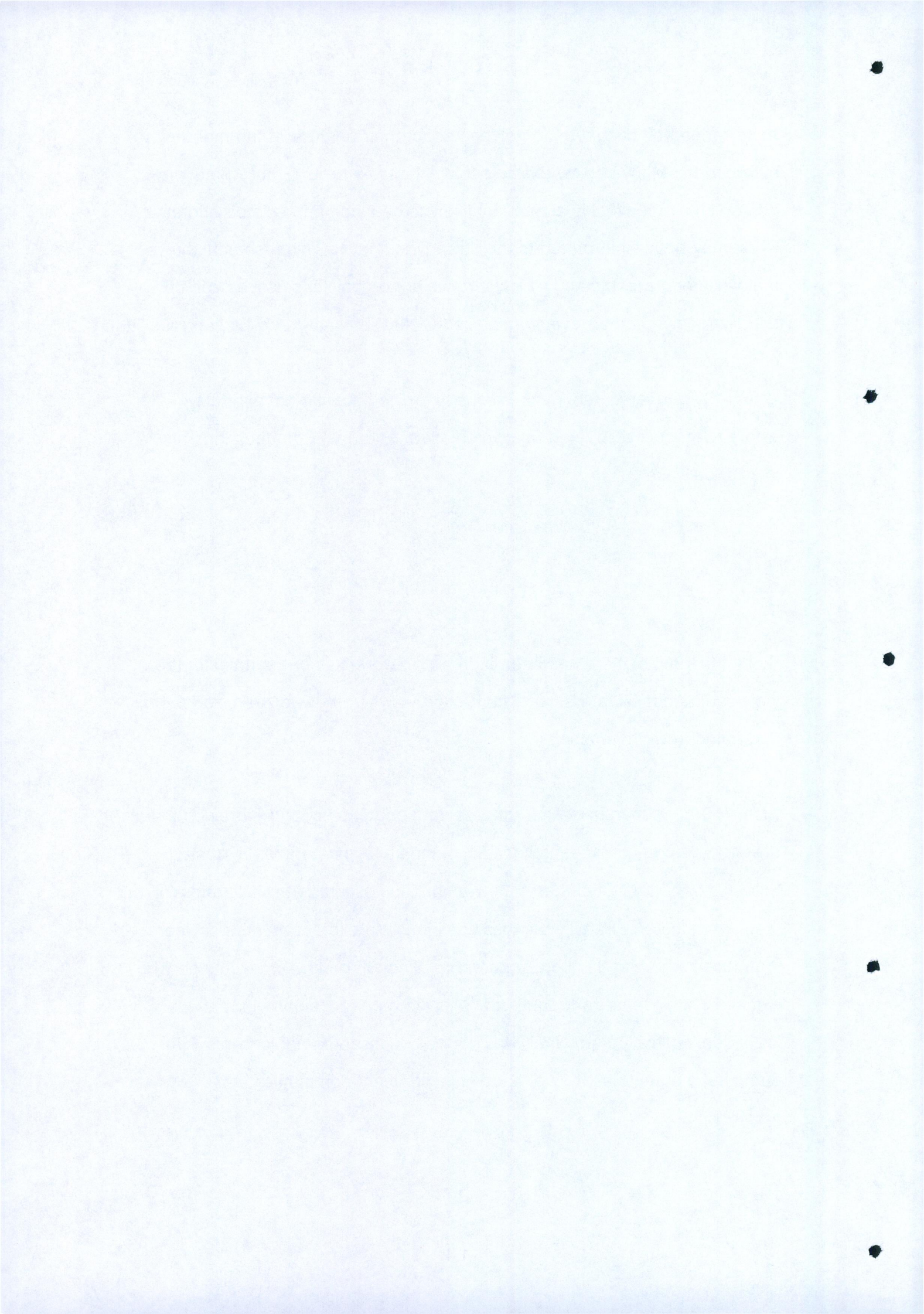
handicapped by distorted stereotypes about their behaviour and moral standards. Many believe this so acutely that they believe that whatever goodwill they manifest is at best not likely to be much appreciated and at worst may be misinterpreted to their disadvantage".¹⁶ This research shows that while adolescents and parents may differ on opinions, issues can be usually resolved on an everyday basis. Csikszentmihalyi and Larson (1984) concluded that

"By and large, the family seems to provide a setting of neutrality where teenagers recover in relative safety and warmth from the highs and lows of daily life".¹⁷

AUTHORITY IN THE HOME

Since the 1960's, there has been a growing awareness of the rights of the individual and there are several conflicting views on how to exercise control and authority in the house.

Elder (1975) researched different parenting approaches and narrowed them down to three major types; autocratic, democratic and permissive control. Findings from the first of these showed that adolescents whose parents told them what to do generally had less confidence in expressing themselves than those who had democratic parents. Although parents in each type who explained their reasons for authority allowed more development in their teenagers' individual growth, it was not as necessary to adolescents with democratic parents as they already enjoyed good, communicative relationships.

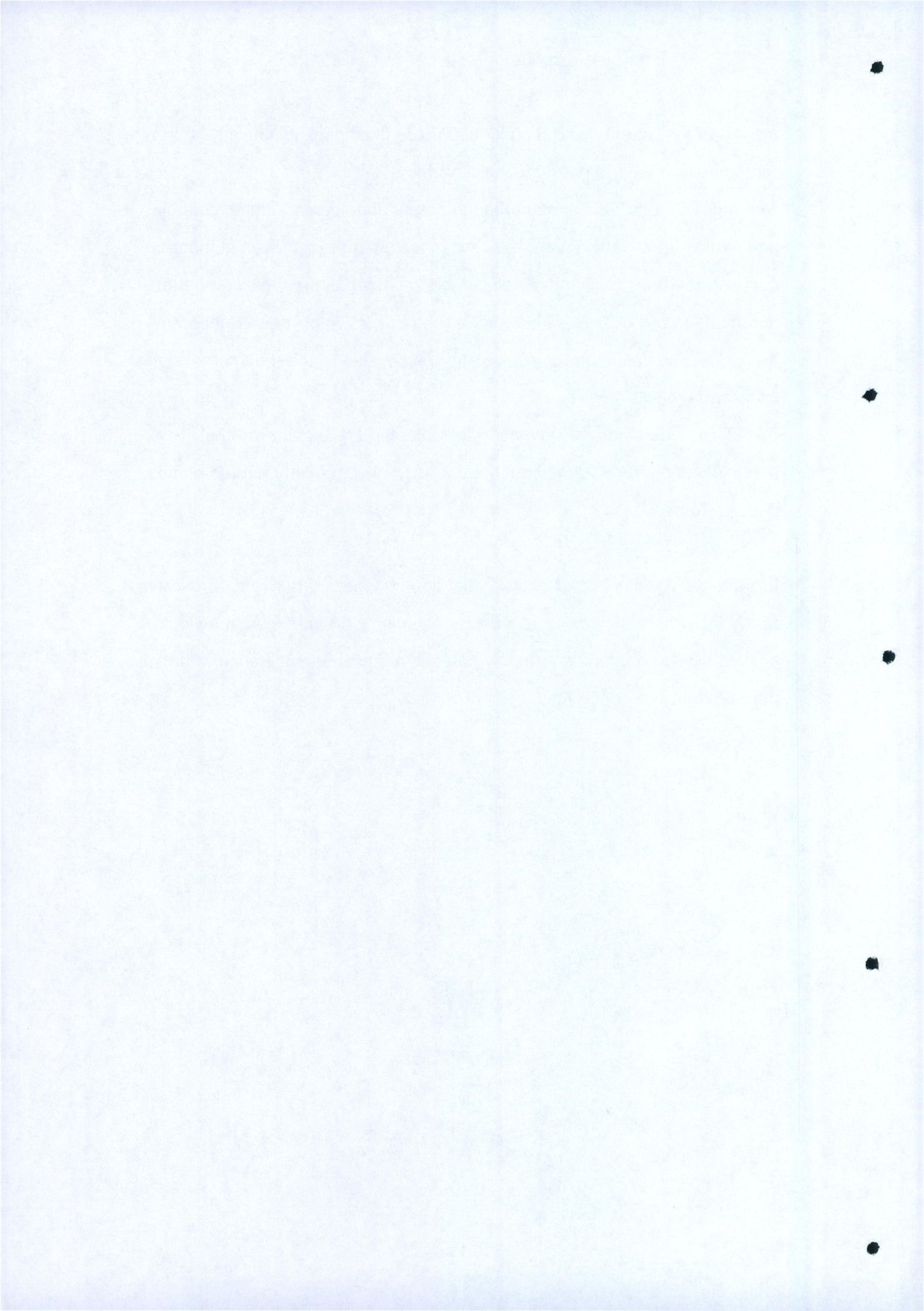


Baumrind's research in 1968 confirmed these findings, substituting the term "authoritative" instead of "democratic".

She argues that while the authoritarian parent attempts to "shape, control and evaluate the behaviour of the child in accordance with a set standard of conduct, the authoritative one values and encourages the development of autonomous self-will. However, unlike the permissive or neglectful parent, he or she also values the assumption of responsibility and the internalisation of personal discipline".¹⁷

Research undertaken by Coleman and Coleman (1984) showed that adolescents preferred democratic solutions to disagreements in the home than any other.

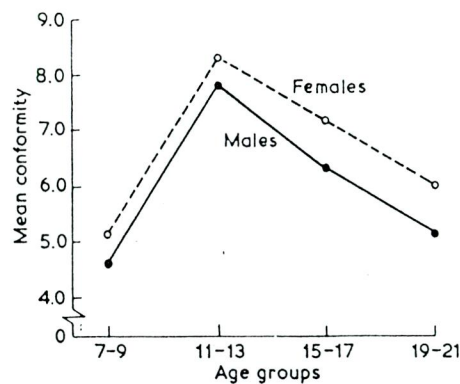
It is interesting to note that adolescents do not generally desire a permissive family life, where they can make decisions entirely on their own, but would prefer to live in a family where they can share power and influence with their parents in making decisions.



6. PEER GROUP INFLUENCE

Peers have an increasingly stronger influence on the interests, behaviour and personalities of the adolescent, as less time is spent without adult supervision. Hartup (1982) claimed that developmental changes alter the relationships of adolescents. These include more advanced cognitive, verbal and reasoning abilities as well as physical changes. The adolescent must acquire new interpersonal skills to cope with these changes. John C. Coleman and Leo Hendry define the basis of the peer group structure being "age, sex, social class, or leisure activities, contexts and interests. Therefore conformity to the group's values and activities may be necessary or the individual adolescent may experience feelings of rejection".¹⁹ Being popular is of vital importance in these early years of adolescence and fear of not fitting in is common. Deplau and Perlman's research concluded that the inability to express emotions, opinions, objections and desires resulted in loneliness.

Coleman found that conformity to the peer group peaks dramatically between the ages of eleven and thirteen. (fig 1)



Source: P. R. Costanzo and M. E. Shaw (1966) *Child Development* 37.

Figure 1 Mean conformity as a function of age.



Brown's studies (1986) among 1,300 adolescents show that "younger adolescents generally favoured group membership, emphasising the crowds ability to provide emotional or instrumental support, foster friendships, and facilitate social interaction."20 The adolescents were asked questions about the importance of the peer group in their lives. Brown then composed a table of six categories for the answers and coded their reasons for and against participation in peer-groups. (fig 2)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Positive reasons</i>	<i>Negative reasons</i>
Identity	Crowd is source of self-concept; helps define one's interests, abilities, personality	
Reputation	Membership builds one's reputation, image, status; increases recognition or popularity among peers; helps avoid negative reputation	Crowds have negative or undesirable image; membership damages reputation or lowers popularity among peers
Conformity vs. Individuality	Crowd fosters desirable conformity or similarity: 'Nice to fit in', 'If everyone does it, it's okay', 'I want friends similar to myself'	Crowd impedes individuality, autonomy, self-reliance; dislike of being stereotyped; 'I don't need a crowd to tell me who I am'
Support	Crowd builds self-confidence, self-esteem; gives sense of belonging, being liked, wanted or accepted; gives someone to trust, turn to or depend on; source of feedback, advice or assistance; source of emotional security	Crowd threatens security, inhibits positive self-feelings, betrays trusts, or endangers emotional or physical well-being; crowd does not supply emotional or instrumental support, or such support is not needed
Friendship	Chance to meet new people; membership builds or maintains friendships; helps avoid loneliness; crowd is where friends are	Crowd restricts relationships; friendships are already formed; dislike of people who are in crowds (or how people act in crowds); prefer being alone
Activity	Crowd is source of activities or activity partners; crowd broadens one's range of activities; enjoy doing things in a group	Crowd restricts activities; don't need a crowd for activities or activity partners

Source: B. B. Brown et al. (1986) Journal of Adolescence 9.

Figure 2 Content coded into each category for/against crowd affiliation.



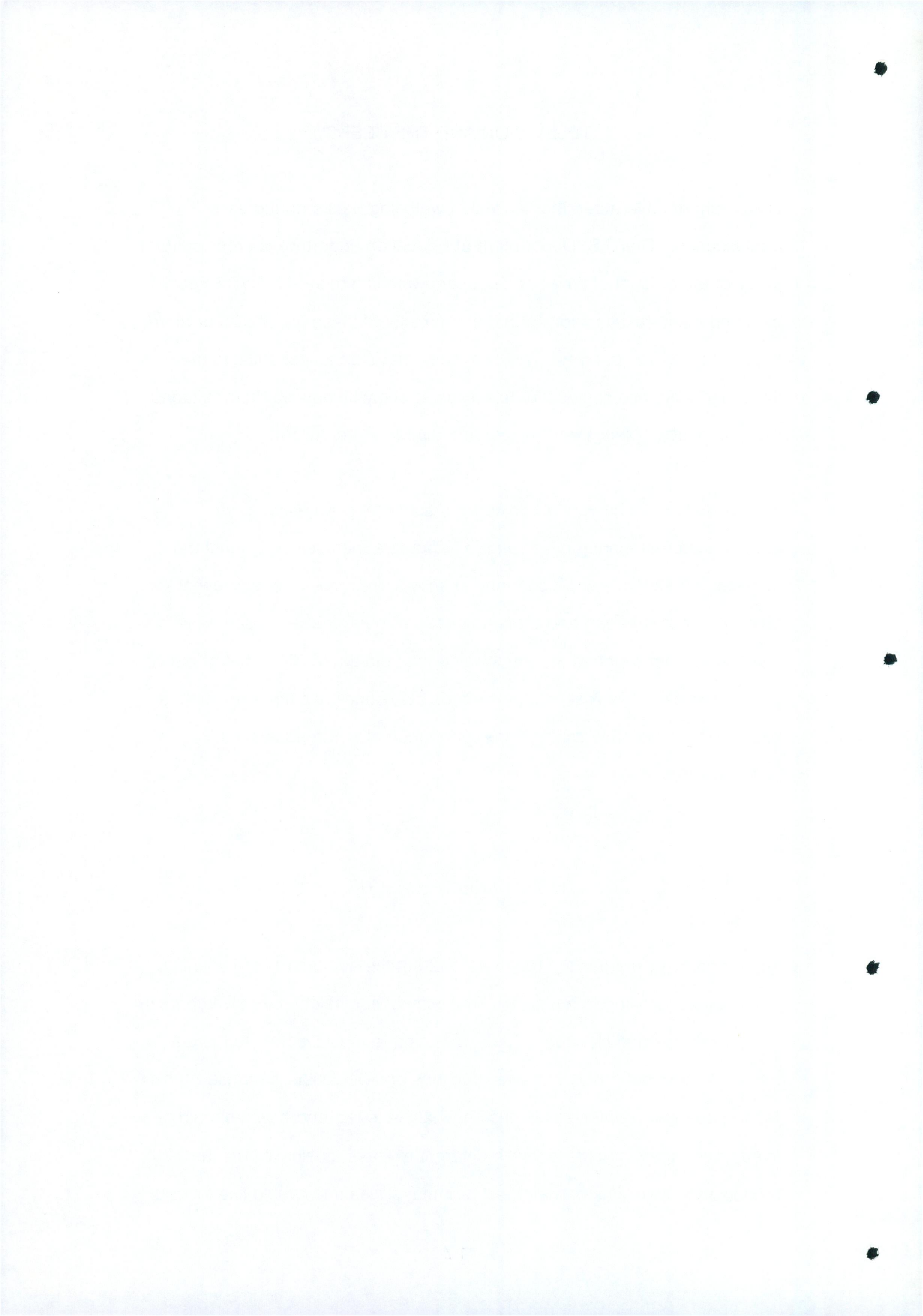
TELEVISION AND THE PEERS

Researchers have noted that television watching peaks during early adolescence. The U.S. Department of Education undertook a cross-cultural study of the amount of time per day spent watching television by 13 year olds and these results showed that the majority of these watched 3 or more hours of television per day. They view the television as essential to their lives, and evidence shows that television strongly influences their attitudes towards people, places and things, and also their behaviour.

Television is used by young adolescents as a means of escape, as a common interest among peers and to "compare themselves against the idealized version of youth appearing in shows like... the Cosby Show"²¹ etc. Gerber, Gross, Morgan and Signorielli (1984) found that adolescents with low self esteem watched more television than did those with a better opinion of themselves. Most research in this area also concludes that the effect of excessive television watching can be detrimental to the adolescent's academic achievements.

MUSIC AND THE PEERS

10,500 hours or more is the rough estimate of the amount of time spent by adolescents listening to music, which is almost equivalent to twelve years in school (Brown and Hendee, 1989). Listening to music is held to have a tremendous effect on adolescents' opinions and behaviour because of this. Most pop music conveys opinions on what life is like and how it should be lived. Teenagers can identify with different types of music which either reflects their own lives or their ideal or fantasy lives they would like to lead.



LaVoie and Collins' 1975 studies on the effects of listening to music on academic achievement show that those who listened to music while working or studying fared worse than did those who did not. It was found that rock music interfered with "both immediate and longer-range recall of information".²² However, they also found that "its informational value for the adolescent provides a source of identification with peers".²³ Yablousky (1967) confirmed this theory, claiming that "the adolescent can achieve transitory loss of self by moving into diffuse groups or crowds of peers in which there is a high degree of anonymity, general adherence to dress patterns and hairstyles, and a wide range of permissible behaviour".²⁴

Pop music also emphasises teenagers feelings of isolation from their parents, schools and other peers and stereotypes women as being weak and sexually provocative.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER I

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CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY TO ENHANCE SELF-EXPRESSION IN EARLY ADOLESCENCE

1. IMPACT OF ADOLESCENCE ON ART

The approach of adolescence on the child has a huge effect both on the artwork of the child, and how he or she perceives it. The adolescent's rapid physical changes and insecurities, the increasing influence of the peer group, their changing relationship with parents, and their growth in ego development and self concept cannot but have a profound effect on the teenager.

During the early years of adolescence, the child's awareness changes from the unconscious to the conscious, as adult awareness approaches. Victor Lowenfeld, in the book The Lowenfeld Lectures, claims that;

"Children are going to move through these changes which will affect them to such a degree that, like most people in general, they will lose confidence in their own creative activities".¹

He adds that the reason for this is because their art-work is not spontaneous any more as they become aware of the finished piece before they begin. "I can't draw" being a common complaint around this time.

He demonstrates this transformation from childhood to adolescent or adult thinking through a graph named "Shift from Unaware to Aware Stages" (Fig 3) giving approximate age groups for the developmental stages of the average person.



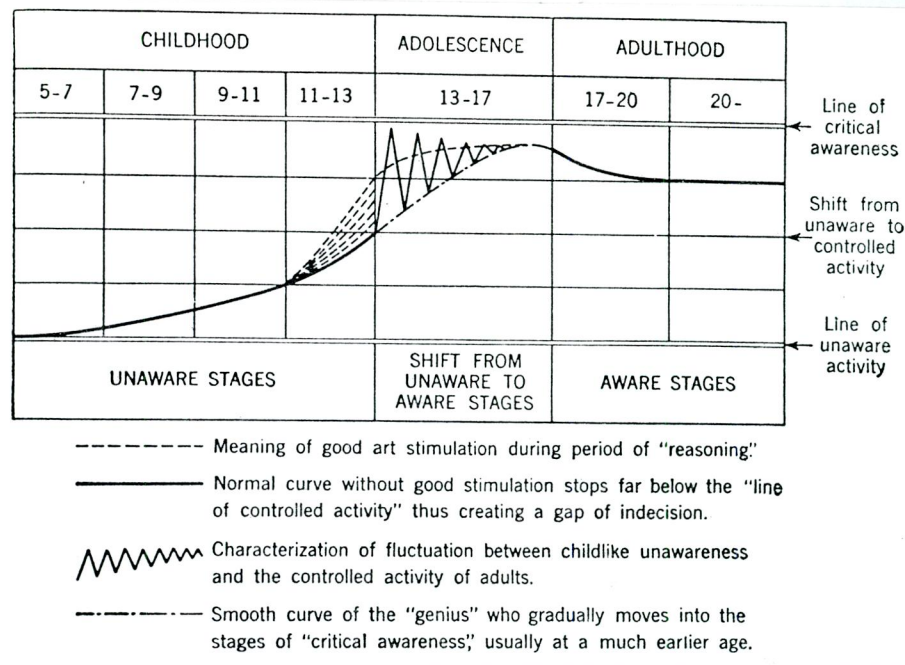


Figure 3 Shift from unaware to aware stages

The graph illustrates the child's growing awareness from the unconscious scribbling stage (5 -7 years), developing more consciousness as he/she begins to understand the relationship between his drawing and the environment around him/her (7 - 9 years). As he/she gets older and becomes more involved in his peer-group and with his/her environment, awareness levels rise (9 - 11 years). However, the gradual curve of awareness rises steeply between the approximate ages of 11 and 13, indicating a sudden development in awareness of the young adolescent. As Lowenfeld (1982) writes;

"From now on, the child becomes conscious of himself, aware of himself; and he also becomes aware of his environment. As a matter of fact, he becomes critically aware of his environment."²

Lowenfeld claims that this is a result of the shock experienced by the young adolescent because of the physical changes that suddenly develop. He writes that different adolescents are affected in various ways. Some try to rid



themselves of all unconscious thought and apply reason and logic in all situations, increasing their awareness in the process. Other young adolescents, and in particular those who are involved in art, retain some of their unconscious or expressive qualities, thereby stalling their development in awareness.

As a result of this increased awareness, the young adolescent's artwork becomes more controlled and aware. In order to teach these students, the teacher must be familiar with the conflicting desires of this age group; to fit in and to be individual. Then the teacher must find ways in which he/she can motivate the students to become individually interested.

At this stage of development, Lowenfeld defines two separate trends in the artwork of young adolescents; *visual* and *haptic*. The *visual* adolescent will try to portray his subject realistically, while the *haptic* adolescent will feel more emotionally involved with his/her work, not relying on realism to express his/her feelings for the subject, instead depending on his own individual interpretation of it. Haptic adolescents do not feel the need to show depth or space, and will often use colours that are not related to the objects being portrayed.

In my own scheme of work, I have struck a medium between the two different trends. Although I encouraged accurate portrait drawings (especially in terms of proportions and tone), the students had the freedom to choose the colours they thought would suit the expression on the face and the painting style which they felt suited them most.



2. TEACHING METHODS PRACTISED

Lowenfeld (1982) delineates three major approaches to art teaching; progressive, perfectionist and the one which recognises the student as an individual.

The first of these approaches, the progressive approach is practised by teachers who wish to "stimulate free behaviour in their classrooms, encourage free expression of adolescent youths or anyone beyond thirteen, and are very happy if they can retain this freshness."⁴ They value the intuitive nature of child art and wish to preserve this freshness throughout adolescence. Although Lowenfeld can understand this motive, he believes that teachers cannot impose childhood standards on growing adolescents as this will make them less confident in displaying their work outside the encouraging atmosphere of the classroom. He claims that, at this stage in their lives, they wish to create art that has a more adult value.

The second group of teachers (ones which practise the perfectionist approach) try to push their students' art to what they consider to be perfection. Lowenfeld feels that although adolescents naturally aim for perfection, their ideas of perfection could be in conflict with their teachers' ideas. He also considers that not all students would be capable of achieving perfection in their work and, as a consequence of this, only a few students can benefit from this teaching approach. Another point he makes is that "these youths have lost their youth and have been driven into perfection at a time when they should still be youths"⁵, and also that the process becomes less important than the product, or finished piece.



The third group of teachers recognise the student as a developing adolescent and, more importantly, as an individual adolescent. Lowenfeld quotes Dr. Robert Burkhart, who studied the individuality of creative expression during adolescence, as saying "At no time is individuality as important as it is during adolescence".⁶ This group of teachers help each student to think, perceive and create art individually, while being aware of the adolescent's contradictory need to conform. If the adolescent student is treated as an individual by his or her teacher, it is much more likely that he/she will feel less inhibited when expressing their feelings and thoughts on their own work and its relationship to others, as they would feel less compelled to conform to the general approach of their peer group within the class.



3. ROLE OF THE TEACHER

The teacher's role in the development of the young adolescent is vitally important. Within the school, the teacher is the adult figure of authority. It is up to the teacher to use this authority effectively to benefit the students. Many argue that of all teachers, the art-room is much less formal than other classrooms; students have freedom to move around (eg; students can be designated certain tasks such as distributing paper or paint); and students are given more freedom to express and discuss their own individual work. The last of these can be facilitated in a number of ways.

(a) DISCUSSION IN THE CLASSROOM

To enhance the adolescent's personal growth, self-awareness and self-confidence in the art-room, discussion can be useful. Dillon writes that "the dynamics of our self become increasingly active, independent, searching, by contrast to passive, dependent or even infantile, reactive and quiescent".⁷ He proposes that by discussing a topic in the classroom, the adolescent explores many new ideas, benefits from the views of others and helps him/her organise ideas in a coherent manner.

Green's research in 1954 concluded that there were many valuable merits to be gained through discussion; among these being eliciting "the total response of the student's personality...promoting reflective inquiry...responsible evaluation."⁸



Dillon insists that the role of the teacher is of immense importance to conduct a formative discussion in the classroom. The teacher's pedagogy must be different to conduct a discussion than any other form of lesson.

"The teacher's behaviour in discussion is far less didactic, directive, controlling and instructional, and more suited to exemplifying and facilitating the discussion."⁹

Here the student has freedom to express their views on the subject in question and give their opinion. This helps them become more confident in giving their own individual responses to situations. The teacher's role is to assist them to make up their minds, and guide the discussion.

Dillon outlines five phases of discussion¹⁰ that should be adhered to by the teacher to conduct a discussion;

- 1 Discussion preparation.
- 2 Presentation of the discussion question.
- 3 Initial address of the discussion question.
- 4 Exchanges of the question.
- 5 Conclusion of discussion.

Greene (1954) stressed that the good teacher should have "a reflective, speculative approach to the subject....a liberal vs authoritarian attitude about conflicting opinions...genuine respect for student minds and interest in student reaction."¹¹

(b) BRAINSTORMING

Le Francois (1994) outlines a number of ways in which brainstorming is an effective technique "producing a wide variety of solutions while deliberately

suspending judgement about the appropriateness of any of them ".¹² To paraphrase his reasons for this claim, he believes that criticism of ideas shouldn't be a part of this process, that all ideas should be encouraged and, in particular, that creative and unusual ideas might be a product of these brainstorming sessions. This gives individual students safety to express their opinions without fear of criticism or ridicule.

(c) EVALUATION

When evaluating the younger adolescent's work in class the teacher should be aware of the student's fear of being seen as "different" from their peers. Even students who know their art is of a high standard can be embarrassed or withdrawn if lavishly praised in front of their class. Those who have reached the "I can't draw " stage may feel particularly reticent during evaluations. It is important that the teacher leads an informative and constructive evaluation in a relaxed atmosphere for it to be successful. Every student's work should be evaluated by the teacher in a constructive way, and this should influence the class to evaluate their own work and that of their classmates in a similar way. George Szekely (1988) writes " A teacher's final statement, when well planned, is among the most effective teaching tools...the statement given must be clear and succinct, yet it must be still be significant, encouraging students to consider the meaning of the experience they have just had and giving them insight into the art process and artistic thought."¹³

This, he considers, gives the student confidence in his or her work.



(d) SUPPORT STUDIES

Using support studies of established or famous artists during the lesson can have a profound effect on the student. George Szekely highlights four distinct reasons which illustrate how the appropriate use of support studies can develop the adolescents individual perception and awareness. The first reason in favour of using support studies is to "demystify the art world and help children to see great artists as...people they can admire, identify with and imitate".¹⁴ The second reason he gives is that when the students see the teacher making constructive comparison with the tasks they do in class with the works of famous artists, they learn to do this themselves, and to connect ideas and express opinions on art in a similarly constructive way. he also believes that it helps students articulate and express themselves through art by observing how other artists do so. Most importantly, he writes, "they learn something that is personally meaningful to them."¹⁵



FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER II

1. John A. Michael. The Lowenfeld Lectures. Pennsylvania State University. p307.
2. Ibid. p309.
3. Ibid. p311
4. Ibid. p311.
5. Ibid. p312.
6. Ibid. p313.
7. James T. Dillon. Using Discussion in Classrooms. Open University Press. p109.
8. Ibid. p111.
9. Ibid. p59.
10. Ibid. p60.
11. Ibid. Pg 51.
12. Guy le Francois Psychology for Teaching. 8th Ed. Wadsworth Inc. p214.
13. George Szekely. Encouraging Creativity in Art Lessons. Columbia University. p129.
14. Ibid. p124.
15. Ibid. p125



CHAPTER III

EVALUATION OF SEQUENCE

LESSON 1

To begin the portrait scheme, I introduced the students to the proportions of the face. We looked at portraits by Albrecht Durer, Gainsborough, Courbet and Rembrandt, and discussed what their subjects looked like - were they happy...sad...stern...poor...rich? The class were very interested in these support studies and volunteered opinions on what the artist thought of their sitters and also about how the sitter wanted to be seen. Through this exercise, the students became more aware of both the physical similarities and individual differences in each others faces. They all drew line drawings of each other's faces following the guidelines for proportion (for example: the eyes are situated halfway down the head). Their drawings were, on the whole, successful, and they enjoyed the activity, evaluating their work in a very constructive way.

LESSON 2

During this class we developed the drawings done during the first class into tone. I brought up a student in front of the class and asked the student if she could see where the light was hitting the face. The students were attentive and responded well to my questions. They all created tonal scales, leaning lightly or heavily on their pencils. I showed them how they could make expressive lines and directional lines. The class were all eager to learn how they could create light and dark tones to make their drawings look more



"real" or "three-dimensional". We looked at tonal drawings by R.B. Kitaj, Rembrandt, Da Vinci and Vermeer to understand tonal values on the face (shadows and light). By the end of the class the students picked out which tonal drawings were most effective.

"The face looks more real"

"There's more of a difference in the shading"

"You can see the shadows better"

LESSON 3

This week the object of the class was to do expressive portrait drawings. I introduced expressive drawings by showing the students artists work which dealt with facial expressions, eg: Van Gogh's self portrait, Da Vinci's Mona Lisa and Munch's The Cry. I asked them what sort of emotion did they think the sitter was feeling, and why they thought so.

"Because the mouth is going up at the sides."

We had a brainstorming session on the word "emotions" and the students came up with words which expressed emotions such as fear, happiness, anger, etc. The class then divided into pairs and posed for each other - one putting an expression on her face while the other drew it. Considering the research done by Coleman which illustrates that conformity peaks during the ages of eleven and thirteen, I was concerned that the students would be too shy or too afraid to appear "different" in front of their peers. Although the students were at first embarrassed about "pulling faces", they were soon enjoying it, complaining if the "model" relaxed her facial expression or was not taking her pose seriously enough. The evaluation of their work was a great success as they guessed what sort of emotion was being expressed in

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the drawings. For homework the class made a collage of facial expressions gathered from magazines.

LESSON 4

I continued the facial expression portrait drawings in this lesson as I felt that they could do with more practise in drawing emotions. We discussed again the characteristics each facial expression had (eg: happy - the mouth turns upwards at the corners, the edges of the nostrils tilt up, the eyes crinkle.) During the evaluation I asked the class if they could imagine what the sitter was thinking of in their pictures. They came up with great ideas and became excited about the emotions and feelings behind the faces. I think that this evaluation and the overall content of the lesson were a success as the students were much more enthusiastic and less self-consciousness this week, putting a lot of expression and character both into their poses and their drawings. I was surprised to overhear the sort of conversations being carried out among the students during their task. One model told her partner she was making an "angry" face and her partner considered that she looked more "worried" than "angry".

"She looks as if she's about to cry."

The student was becoming more aware of facial expressions and could see tension in the face of the student she was drawing.



LESSON 5

At the start of this class I introduced primary and secondary colours, and experimentation in mixing paint in varying quantities. They had never dealt with colour theory. We looked at artists who used a lot of primary and secondary colours, including Kandinsky. The students worked out what colours they would have to mix together to achieve the oranges or purples portrayed. Their task was to experiment with mixing different amounts of primary colours together to create secondary colours which varied in tone. Each student had their own palette in which to mix their colours and they filled the page with experimentation, writing beside each one the amount of each colour used.(eg; half red, half yellow...one drop yellow, two blue.) The class enjoyed the freedom allowed for experimentation and discovery allowed in this lesson. Some became so excited about the colours they "invented", that they named them.("leafy green.") There was also an element of teamwork involved. If one student achieved a particularly unusual hue, others wanted to know how it was created. At the end of the class, the students assembled and asked each other how they created certain colours and what sort of colour it was.

"What colour did you mix in to get it so bright?"

LESSON 6

In this class I introduced the effect of black and white paint on the tone of colour. This time their task was more structured, as I wanted to test their accuracy and neatness. They filled in grids of red, blue and yellow, mixing in black and white gradually on opposite ends of the scale. Because of their

experimentation in the previous lesson, they had no difficulty with this task and fully understood the objectives of the lesson. The challenge of mixing gradating colours was a good follow-up lesson to the freer experimentation allowed in last weeks task. We looked at tonal colours as portrayed by artists, such as Paul Klee, so they could understand the value placed upon accurate and effective colour mixing.

LESSON 7

At the beginning of this lesson, I showed the class pictures by Seurat, Van Gogh, Rembrandt and Modigliani and discussed the techniques involved in each one eg: pointillism, impasto, sfumato. I demonstrated how to achieve these techniques and students were very eager to experiment with these styles. They then experimented with these techniques themselves, using their brushes to blend, paint thick strokes and dot the paper lightly with colour. When we evaluated what they had done, a lot of the students were more enthusiastic about a particular style.

We then discussed the emotive effects of colour and brainstormed this topic. The students volunteered a lot of ideas on what colour would best suit different moods (eg; blue = sadness, loneliness, depression..yellow= happiness...red=anger) We again looked to support studies for further ideas. The students then looked at their own expressive portraits and talked about the colours that would be appropriate to express the emotion portrayed and the style they would prefer to use on them. The students had the freedom to paint their portraits in either a "realistic" way (eg: by blending the paint), which would cater for those "visually" minded students or in a



more expressive way, which I felt the haptic students would feel happier with; concentrating more on abstract colour. They then began to paint their pictures monochromatically after choosing the colour and style. Overall, the students were happy with what they achieved during the class. I think that a major part of their satisfaction was that their individual paintings were different from those produced by their classmates.

LESSON 8

Before the students resumed painting their portraits, I introduced them to the concept of complementary and harmonising colours, showing them pictures by Matisse and Kandinsky to illustrate their effects. I also demonstrated the effect of colours placed beside each other with coloured card, asking the students what they thought of the combination.

"They clash!"

"They are kind of alike."

"They blend together."

We discussed the type of emotions that would suit harmonious and complementary, or contrasting, colours.

"The complementary colours would suit this one to show the person is shocked".

We discussed how we would paint in the background - would we use the same technique? A complementary or harmonious colour scheme? Again the students had the freedom to make these choices independently and by the end of the class they had all achieved very different and individual painted portraits. They all wanted to talk about their work and tell the rest of the class why they chose the technique and colours to express the mood they wished to portray in their paintings.



RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF SCHEME

Throughout my scheme of work, I encouraged the students to find individual approaches to drawing and painting, colour and technique. Although at first the students did not want to draw attention to their work, they soon became eager to talk about their individual feelings on the expressions they portrayed and the way in which they created them. I believe that by introducing the class to monochromatic painting and a variation of painting styles, they became less concerned about their neighbour's ability in contrast to their own. Because they all had an individual approach to painting and an individual expression to paint, they were more confident that their style was as valid as anyone else's in class and because of this, they each felt a certain pride in their finished product. The class had a lot of freedom to find their own style and colour scheme, and I think that helped them find self-expression through their work.

As the scheme progressed the students developed a number of skills. They learned how to discuss both their own work and their classmates, which I believe is extremely important in developing individual critical skills. By contributing verbally as well as practically, the students gained more confidence in their own opinions, and learned to understand and appreciate each others views. This was probably most obviously seen during evaluations, when they assessed each others work, criticizing or praising constructively. Through constant evaluation the class gradually became more confident in making judgements.

The use of support studies demonstrated the relevance of portraiture as a genre and also the validity of different styles of painting. Through reference

to famous artists the students could choose the art style that appealed to them most and could give reasons for their own opinion while appreciating the others. The students also learned how to use art terminology (eg: "Impasto", "sfumato") by discussing other artists work and also through constant discussion and repetition during classtime.

PLATE I



PLATE I

Lesson 2. Student's work. Tonal portrait drawings.



PLATE II



Visual Aid

PLATE II

Lesson 2. Visual aid of a tonal portrait.



PLATE III



PLATE III

Lesson 3 & 4. Student's work. Expressive portaiture.



PLATE IV



PLATE IV

Lesson 3. Student's homework. Collage of facial expressions.



PLATE V

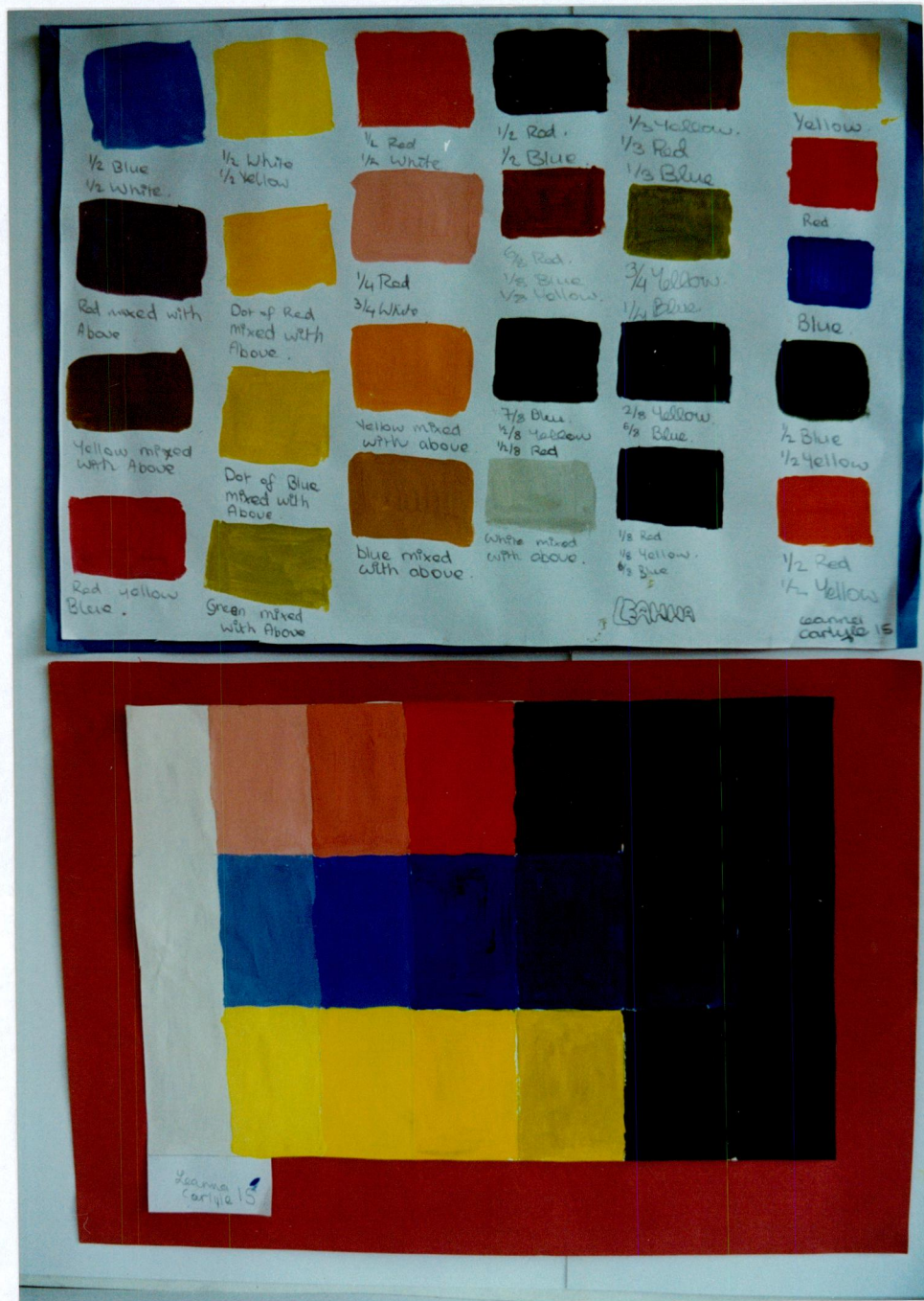


PLATE V

Lesson 5 & 6. Student's work. Experiments with colour mixing and tone.

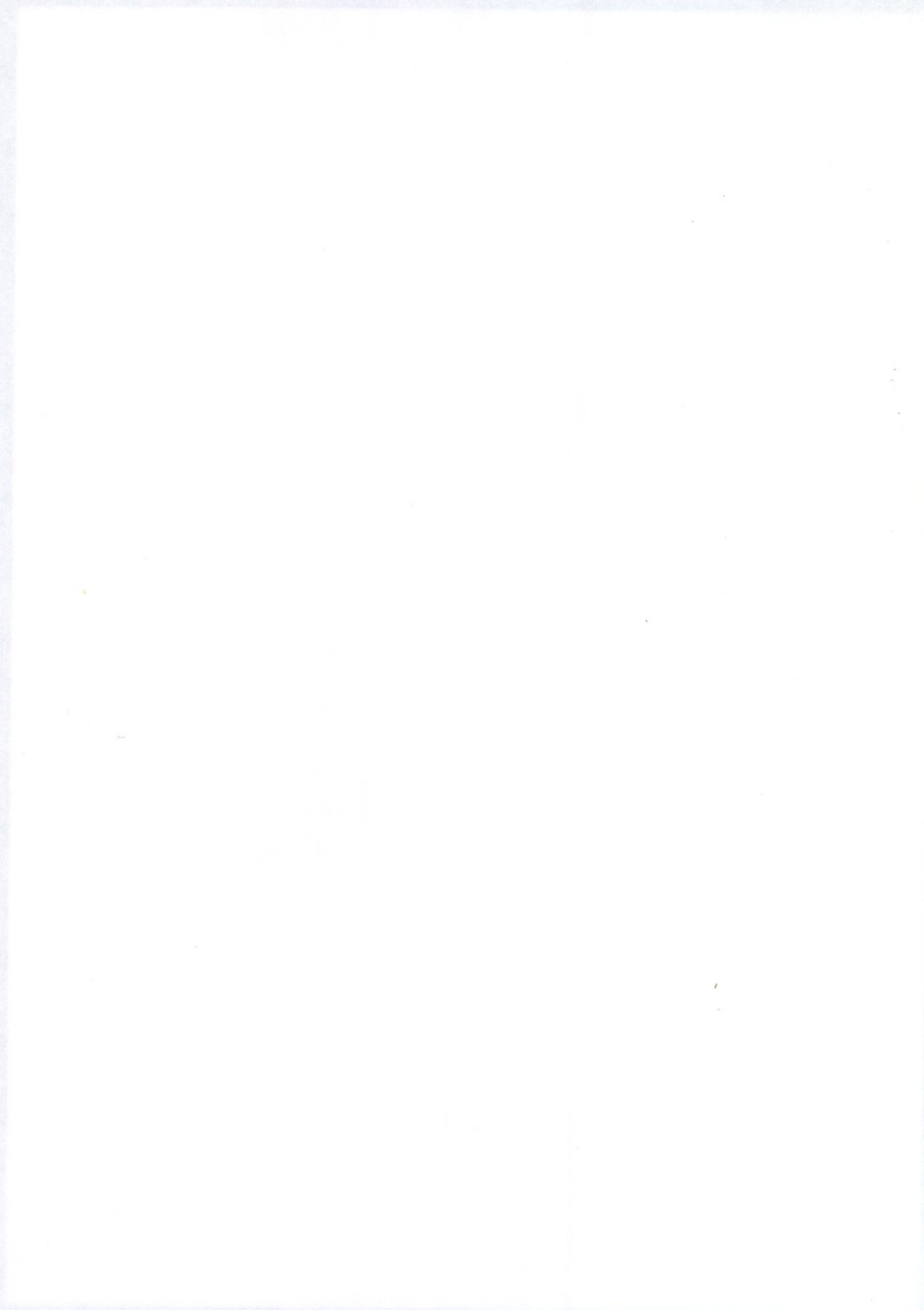


PLATE VI

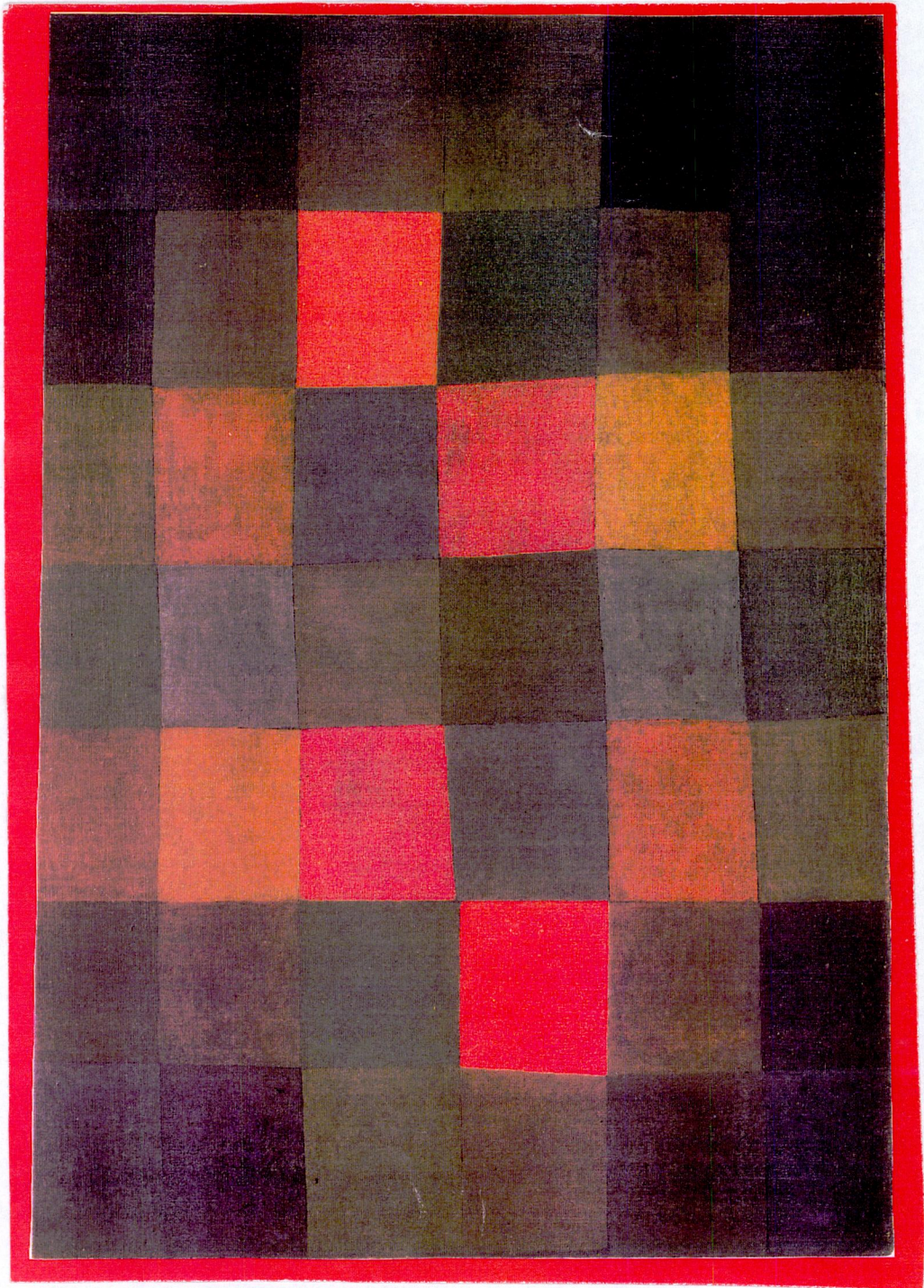


PLATE VI

Lesson 6. Support studies. Paul Klee.



PLATE VII



PLATE VII

Lesson 7 & 8. Student's work. Expressive portrait painting.



PLATE VIII



PLATE VIII

Lesson 7 & 8. Student's work. Expressive portrait painting.



PLATE IX

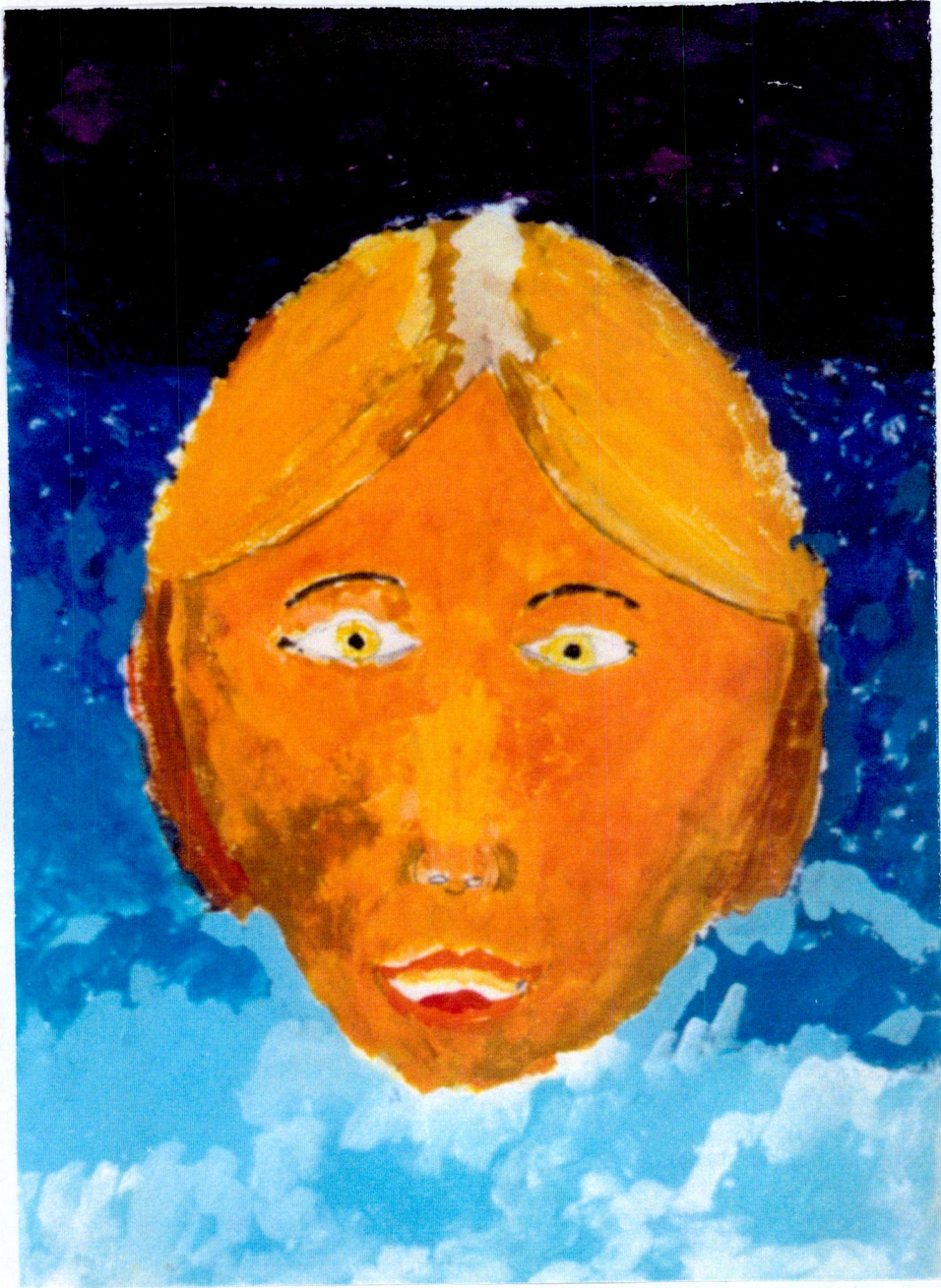


PLATE IX

Lesson 7 &8. Student's work. Expressive portrait painting.



PLATE X



PLATE X

Lesson 7 &8. Support studies. Van Gogh.



PLATE XI



REMBRANDT

Support Studies

PLATE XI

Lesson 7 &8. Support studies. Rembrandt.



CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS FROM RESEARCH

In this dissertation, Chapter 1 explores the influences on the development of self-expression in early adolescence. This chapter reviews the literature and is essentially theoretical. Chapter 2 deals with how self-expression can be encouraged in the artroom and the consequent advantages to be gained by the student, both intellectually and artistically. In Chapter 3, the ideas researched in the first two chapters are put into practice in the artroom by implementing an expressive portrait painting scheme.

Results from the scheme reveal very positive implications for the encouragement of self-expression during practical art lessons. Among these implications for the student are:

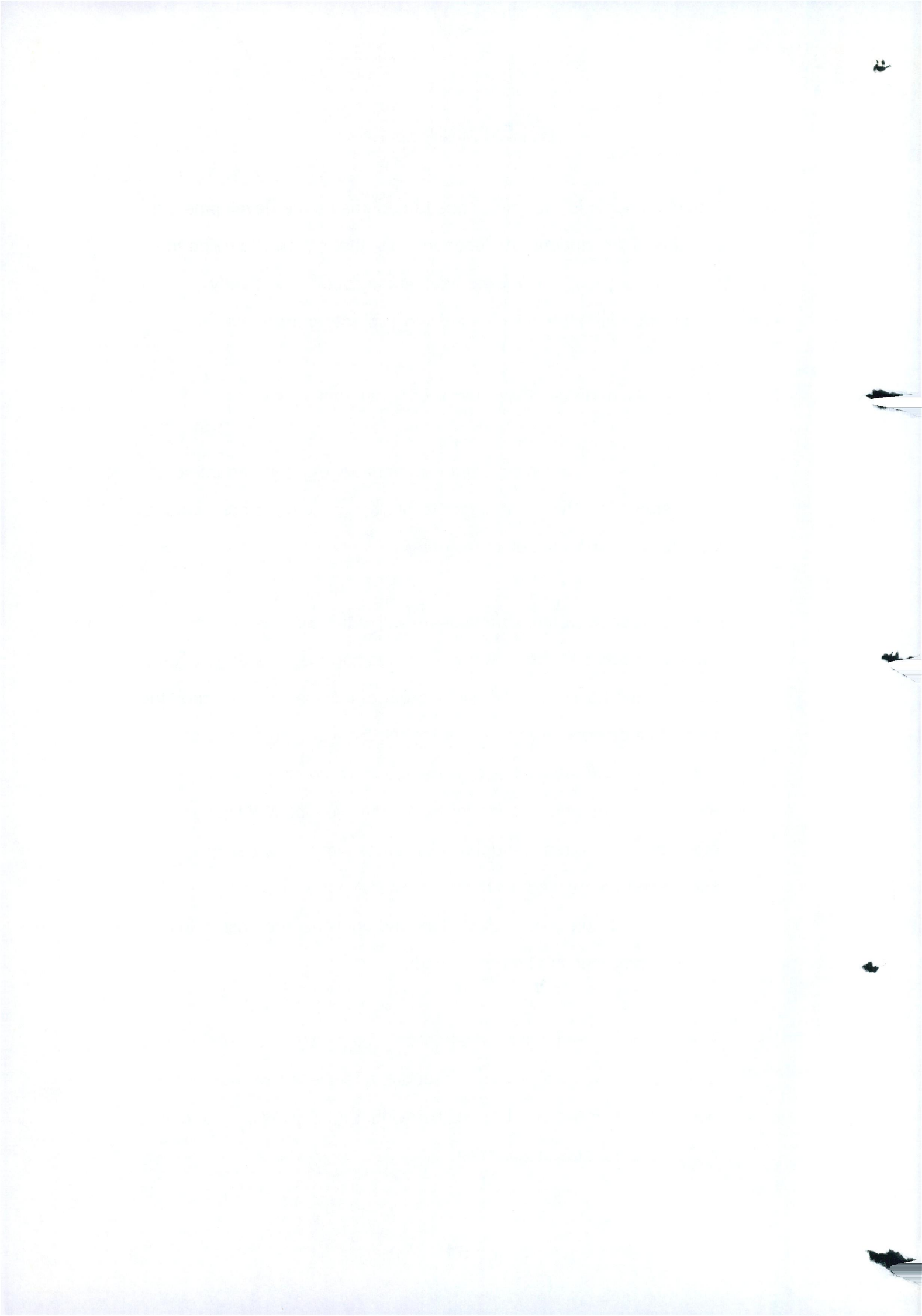
- (a) A growth of consciousness and confidence in his/her own individuality and the individuality of others.
- (b) A willingness to speak and contribute more openly in class.
- (c) The ability to evaluate his/her own work and the work of others through constructive criticism.
- (d) An awareness of many different art styles through which he/she may express his/her feelings on a subject.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The role of the teacher is extremely important to ensure the development of self-expression in the student. As teachers have the authority to guide the class in the way they wish it is imperative that they use this authority effectively to help their students develop into expressive articulate individuals.

Some ways in which the teacher could accomplish this are by:

- (a) Introducing a theme which is relevant to the age-group and interests of the students. This will ensure the interest of the class and stimulate them to work willingly during their tasks.
- (b) Creating a good working atmosphere within the classroom. The artroom should be a place where students can feel relaxed enough to express their opinions freely without fear of ridicule, while on the other hand must be conducive to achieving the aims and objectives of the lesson. This can be achieved by the teacher's constant encouragement. If a student answers a question incorrectly, it is important that the teacher does not alienate him/her by being dismissive in correcting him/her. This will help the students become more confident in their work and opinions and ensure full student co operation and participation.
- (c) Giving each student individual attention as they work. By speaking to all of the students individually the students feel less inhibition about expressing their reasons behind their work and any difficulties they might be experiencing with the task.



- (d) Using appropriate visual aids and support studies for each lesson. By introducing the students to the work of famous artists, the teacher motivates them to create their own individual artwork. It helps students become more aware of the possibilities that can be achieved and also makes them more aware of the relevance of their own work.

- (e) Conducting demonstrations to show how the tasks can be done. I believe it is extremely important that students are given a good demonstration before beginning a task, as they are then confident in their ability to achieve a good result and feel more freedom to challenge themselves in their work. I found it very helpful to include students in my demonstrations as this encouraged them to be less self-conscious in their work and more willing to participate in class.

Through studying the research undertaken on the subject of young adolescents similar to the students I am teaching. I understand that they are very uncertain of their individual value in society and desire for conformity within their peer group in order to feel secure. However, I believe that early adolescence is a time of vital importance in shaping the identity and individual character of a person and that only through self-expression can the individual adolescents explore themselves and their relationship to others.



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